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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000041

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/08/2018

TAGS: PREL PTER PGOV AM IZ TU

SUBJECT: TURKEY'S PM DISCUSSES TERRORISM, ARMENIAN GENOCIDE  
RESOLUTION AND ENERGY WITH CODEL MARTINEZ

REF: ANKARA 0021

Classified By: Charge Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4(b),(d)

¶1. (C) Summary. In a January 7 meeting with Codel Martinez, Prime Minister Erdogan said he hopes for continued, vigorous bilateral cooperation against terrorism and stressed Turkey wants to contribute positively to Iraq's welfare. He said the House's Armenian Genocide Resolution (H.R.106) had "insulted" Turkey and outlined GOT outreach measures to improve relations with Armenia. Noting Turkey-Greece relations are the "best ever", Erdogan told the senators he expects the Greek prime minister will visit Turkey soon -- the first visit in 55 years. The delegation also addressed energy, Iran and Russia. End summary.

PKK TERRORISM

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¶2. (C) Bilateral cooperation in the fight against terrorism is of tremendous importance, Erdogan told the delegation. President Bush's November 5 statement that the PKK is a common enemy was a "milestone"; it fulfilled the Turkish public's expectations and works as a buffer against anti-Americanism in Turkey. Erdogan expressed profuse gratitude along with his hope that bilateral cooperation will continue and expand. Senator Martinez responded that finding a long-term solution to the PKK goes beyond bilateral military cooperation. Noting that Iraq's stability is delicate and vital, he encouraged Turkey to pursue political approaches as well.

¶3. (SBU) Discussing his recent trip to Diyarbakir to visit victims of the January 3 bombing (reftel), Erdogan stressed that the PKK is harming Turkey's Kurdish-origin citizens. "Those who claim there is discrimination against Kurds are killing people in (the southeast)," he said. Senator Martinez commented that victims are the main issue in combating terrorism: real people suffer real consequences from terrorist attacks. Erdogan described his moving, bedside moments with Diyarbakir victims, including one boy who may lose his sight. Senator Martinez offered to help if necessary, through Florida's Baskin Palmer Eye Institute.

NORTHERN IRAQ

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¶4. (SBU) Erdogan said Turkey is ready to help with Iraq's democratization, emphasizing Turkey has no intentions or secret plans other than contributing to Iraq's welfare.

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Iraq's resources should be shared equally by all Iraqis, he added. The understanding that Kirkuk belongs to all Iraqis should be stated in the country's constitution.

AGR

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¶ 15. (SBU) After expressing thanks for USG efforts to explain the consequences of H.R. 106, Erdogan told the Codel that the HFRC vote in favor of the resolution had "insulted" Turkey. Such proposals could make restoring Turkish-Armenian relations more difficult. Parliaments should not be involved in rewriting history; history should be left to the historians. The GOT would appreciate Congress's support for Turkey's offer to form a joint historical commission to study the tragic events of 1915-1917, Erdogan said, adding that Armenia has not yet responded to the proposal. As prime minister, Erdogan said he has opened the air corridor with Armenia, restored an Armenian church on Akdemar Island near Van, and refrained from deporting 40,000 illegal Armenian immigrants working in Turkey.

¶ 16. (C) Senator Martinez noted that many in the US Senate did not support the House resolution. He urged Turkey to restore relations with Armenia as a way to defuse the political dynamic in the US.

#### TURKEY-GREECE RELATIONS

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¶ 17. (C) Turkey's relations with Greece are the best ever, largely because Turkey has based its foreign policy on building friendships, Erdogan said. "If all goes as planned, a Greek prime minister will visit Turkey for the first time since 1952," he said. The talks may lead to "mutual

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"understandings" on lingering disputes over Cyprus and Aegean waters, he predicted. Improved bilateral military communications, trade relations and energy cooperation have laid the groundwork for carrying relations forward, he said.

ENERGY

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¶ 18. (SBU) Senator Craig raised the importance of bilateral cooperation on energy security, pledging to partner with Turkey on pipelines and other measures. Erdogan agreed energy is of serious concern, noting that Turkey is having trouble purchasing turbines to convert natural gas into electricity. Turbines that were available in eight months now take two to three years to obtain. As alternatives, the GOT is working on hydro, thermal and nuclear power plants and renewable energy projects.

¶ 19. (SBU) Erdogan commented that Iran reduced its supply of natural gas to Turkey in the last ten days from 28 million cubic meters per day to 1 to 2 million cubic meters per day, causing serious shortages. The GOI told Energy Minister Guler the cuts are due to increased use during extreme cold weather in Iran, he said. Pointing out that Russia and Iran are Turkey's only sources, Erdogan admitted Turkey must vary its supply and diversify its resources. Natural gas use has skyrocketed in Turkey, he said. Only nine provinces consumed it in 2002; now 51 (of 84) provinces use it and industrial use has increased as well. "If we need to, we will reduce the supply to industry," he said.

IRAN

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¶ 10. (SBU) Senator Martinez raised USG concern with Iran's illegal nuclear weapon program, stressing that the US wants to work with Turkey to present as united an international front as possible on what is, for the US, a very important issue. Erdogan replied the GOT, too, is concerned Iran might use its nuclear energy program as a source for nuclear weapons.

RUSSIA

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¶11. (SBU) Senator Grassley asked whether Erdogan was concerned about trends to "re-Sovietize" Russia. The PM agreed such a tendency exists, adding that Russia's recent elections raised interesting questions: Will President Putin become the next prime minister? If yes, will he function like a prime minister? If so, how will the next president function?

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